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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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Monday, 01 December 2008, 13:54

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 NEW DELHI 003031

SIPDIS

FOR PRINCIPALS FROM AMBASSADOR MULFORD

EO 12958 DECL: 12/01/2018

TAGS PGOV, PTER, PHUM, PREL, PINR, KDEM, KISL, PK, IN

SUBJECT: MUMBAI TERROR ATTACKS: POLITICAL FALLOUT CONTINUES

REF: A. NEW DELHI 3025 B. NEW DELHI 3024 C. NEW DELHI 3018 D. MUMBAI 550

Classified By: Ambassador David C. Mulford for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (C) Summary: A day after the Home Minister was sacked, the impact of the Mumbai tragedy continued to play out domestically and in the Indo-Pakistani relationship. The fallout of the Mumbai terror attacks continued on November 30-December 1 as the Prime Minister and the Congress Party tried to contain the Maharashtra Shakeup

¶2. (C) Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister R.R. Patil submitted his resignation after the media vilified him for his public remarks. The PM unveils new measures

¶3. (U) At a five-hour all-party meeting that lasted late into the night of November 30, the Prime Minister announced a series of steps the GOI is taking to address the Mumbai attacks. These include:  
-- establishing a Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to play a leading role in fighting terrorism;  
-- enacting stronger laws to allow security agencies to more effectively fight terrorism;  
-- enhancing maritime and air security by strengthening the surveillance and interdiction capabilities of the navy, the

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coast guard, the coastal police, the air force and the civil aviation ministry;

-- increasing the size of the National Security Guard and establishing four hubs in addition to the one site outside of Delhi where it is currently located.  
¶4. (SBU) The PM came under attack from all sides at the all-party meeting. The two top BJP leaders, L.K. Advani and Rajnath Singh, skipped the "Cosmetic" and "Too Little, Too Late"

¶5. (SBU) The BJP also increased its pressure publicly, demanding that the government quit over its responsibility for the Mumbai tragedy. On December 1, former Ambassador V.K. Grover told Poloff that the removal of the Home Minister was overdue. "These changes will not satisfy the people. Public remains angry at Pakistan"

¶6. (C) Although much of the attention of the Indian public and media has focused on their government's failings, anger toward Pakistan has grown. The PM's speech on December 1, 2008, was widely condemned as "Too Little, Too Late".

¶7. (C) In a townhall meeting moderated by Barkha Dutt on NDTV, the audience broke into applause when one participant suggested that India strike first. The PM responded by saying that the government is not considering such a move. The audience then asked if the PM had any comments on the recent attacks in Mumbai. The PM responded by saying that the government is investigating the attacks and that the investigation is ongoing. The audience then asked if the PM had any comments on the recent attacks in Mumbai. The PM responded by saying that the government is investigating the attacks and that the investigation is ongoing.

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¶13. (C) According to XXXXXXXXXXXX, the media's portrayal of how the events will negatively affect the bilateral relationship will fizzle out.

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of India's embassy in Kabul, describing GOI's reaction as impulsive and politically motivated when it immediately pinned blame on Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

¶14. (C) Before the Mumbai attacks there existed a standing offer by Pakistan to have the two countries' intelligence chiefs cooperate, according to a source.

Comment: No Military Confrontation Anticipated

¶15. (C) Despite the strong diplomatic rhetoric we expect to see in the next several months, the chances of a military confrontation are being

Comment: Not a Good Time to be the Ruling Party

¶16. (C) There is increasing agreement between political analysts that the sacking of the Home Minister and announcement of the new measures to